

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-32 (canceled)

33. (New) A method for providing a user interface for an electronic device having a housing that includes a display, the method comprising:

providing an input element on the housing wherein the input element is separate from the display;

displaying information in a foreground of the display;

displaying a control image in a background of the display, the control image indicating a task to be performed by the electronic device when the input element is activated; and

associating the control image with the input element so that activation of the input element initiates performance of the task indicated by the control image.

34. (New) The method of claim 33 wherein the act of associating the control image with the input element includes positioning the control image in the background of the display proximate the input element.

35. (New) The method of claim 33 further comprising:

providing a plurality of input elements on the housing separate from the display;

displaying a plurality of control images in the background of the display; and

associating each of the control images with a different one of the plurality of input elements.

36. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein the act of associating each of the control images with a different one of the plurality of input elements includes positioning each of the control images in the background of the display proximate a separate one of the input elements.

37. (New) The method of claim 35 further comprising:

defining a plurality of regions within the background of the display; and

positioning each of the control images within one of the defined regions.

38. (New) The method of claim 37 wherein the act of associating each of the control images with a different one of the plurality of input elements includes positioning each of the input elements proximate a separate one of the defined regions.

39. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein each of the input elements comprise a button positioned on the housing.

40. (New) The method of claim 39 wherein the electronic device comprises a watch.

41. (New) The method of claim 33 wherein the input element is a joystick, a rocker switch, a rotary dial, or a slide bar, and wherein the input element provides for movement in at least two directions, the method further comprising:

displaying a plurality of control images in the background of the display; and
associating each of the control images with a different directional movement of the input element.

42. (New) The method of claim 41 wherein the act of associating each of the control images with a different directional movement of the input element includes:

defining a plurality of regions within the background of the display, each of the regions corresponding to one of the directional movements of the input element; and
positioning each of the control images within one of the defined regions.

43. (New) A method for inputting control signals to an electronic device, the electronic device having a housing and a graphical user interface that includes a display, the method comprising:

providing an input element on the housing wherein the input element is separate from the display;

generating an information screen;

generating a control screen having at least one control image, the control image indicating a task to be performed by the electronic device when the input element is activated;

associating the control image with the input element so that activation of the input element initiates performance of the task indicated by the control image;

combining the information screen and the control screen into a composite screen such that the information screen and the control screen appear in an overlapping fashion; and

displaying the composite screen in the display.

44. (New) The method of claim 43 wherein the act of associating the control image with the input element includes positioning the control image in the control screen proximate the input element.

45. (New) The method of claim 43 wherein the combining operation includes blending the information screen and the control screen such that the information screen appears in front of the control screen.

46. (New) The method of claim 43 wherein the combining operation includes blending the information screen and the control screen such that the control screen appears in front of the information screen.

47. (New) The method of claim 43 further comprising:
providing a plurality of input elements on the housing separate from the display;
displaying a plurality of control images in the control screen; and
associating each of the control images with a different one of the plurality of input elements.

48. (New) The method of claim 47 wherein the act of associating each of the control images with a different one of the plurality of input elements includes positioning each of the control images in the control screen proximate a separate one of the input elements.

49. (New) The method of claim 47 further comprising:
defining a plurality of regions within the control screen; and
positioning each of the control images within one of the defined regions.

50. (New) The method of claim 49 wherein the act of associating each of the control images with a different one of the plurality of input elements includes positioning each of the input elements proximate a separate one of the defined regions.

51. (New) The method of claim 47 wherein each of the input elements comprise a button positioned on the housing.

52. (New) The method of claim 51 wherein the electronic device comprises a watch.

53. (New) The method of claim 43 wherein the input element is a joystick, a rocker switch, a rotary dial, or a slide bar, and wherein the input element provides for movement in at least two directions, the method further comprising:

displaying a plurality of control images in the control screen; and

associating each of the control images with a different directional movement of the input element.

54. (New) The method of claim 53 wherein the act of associating each of the control images with a different directional movement of the input element includes:

defining a plurality of regions within the control screen, each of the regions corresponding to one of the directional movements of the input element; and
positioning each of the control images within one of the defined regions.

55. (New) A computer program product readable by a computing system and encoding a computer program of instructions for executing a computer process for inputting control signals to an electronic device, the electronic device having a housing, a display and at least one input element separate from the display, the computer process comprising:

generating an information screen;
generating a control screen having at least one control image, the control image indicating a task to be performed by the electronic device when the input element is activated;
associating the control image with the input element so that activation of the input element initiates performance of the task indicated by the control image;
combining the information screen and the control screen into a composite screen such that the information screen and the control screen appear in overlapping fashion; and
displaying the composite screen on the entire display.

56. (New) The computer program product of claim 55 wherein the computer process further comprises receiving an activation signal from the input element.

57. (New) The computer program product of claim 56 wherein the computer process further comprises performing the task indicated by the control image associated with the input element after the activation signal is received.

58. (New) The computer program product of claim 55 wherein the act of associating the control image with the input element includes positioning the control image in the control screen proximate the input element.

59. (New) The computer program product of claim 55 wherein the combining operation includes blending the information screen and the control screen such that the information screen appears in front of the control screen.

60. (New) The computer program product of claim 55 wherein the electronic device includes a plurality of input elements separate from the display, the computer process further comprising:

displaying a plurality of control images in the control screen; and
associating each of the control images with a different one of the plurality of input elements.

61. (New) The computer program product of claim 60 wherein the computer process further comprises:

defining a plurality of regions within the control screen; and
positioning each of the control images within one of the defined regions.

62. (New) The computer program product of claim 61 wherein the act of associating each of the control images with a different one of the plurality of input elements includes positioning each of the input elements proximate a separate one of the defined regions.

63. (New) The computer program product of claim 62 wherein the computer process further comprises:

loading a character set, the character set including a plurality of individual characters;

dividing the character set into character subsets;

representing each of the character subsets as a separate control image in the control screen;

receiving an activation signal from one of the input elements representing a selection of one of the character subsets;

narrowing a range of the individual characters within the character set to the selected character subset; and

repeating the dividing, representing, receiving, and narrowing operations until a selection of one of the individual characters is made.

64. (New) The computer program product of claim 63 wherein the electronic device comprises a watch.